

**REFERENCE NO: CR/2021/0693/FUL**

**LOCATION:** [HEDLEY HOUSE, 225 THREE BRIDGES ROAD, THREE BRIDGES, CRAWLEY](#)  
**WARD:** Three Bridges  
**PROPOSAL:** CHANGE OF USE FROM A SIX PERSON HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (C4) TO A HOSTEL (SUI GENERIS) FOR SIX PEOPLE TO BE MANAGED BY CRAWLEY HOMES.

**TARGET DECISION DATE:** 29 March 2022

**CASE OFFICER:** Mr H. Walke

**APPLICANT'S NAME:** Mr Jack Veaney

**AGENT'S NAME:** Mr Jack Veaney

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**PLANS & DRAWINGS CONSIDERED:-**

Drawing Number	Revision	Drawing Title
CBC001		Site Location Plan
CBC002		Block Plan
CBC003	A	Existing and Proposed Floorplan

**CONSULTEE NOTIFICATIONS & RESPONSES:-**

- |    |  |                                   |
|----|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | WSCC Highways                              | No objection subject to condition |
| 2. | CBC Drainage Officer                       | Comments provided                 |
| 3. | CBC Housing Enabling & Development Manager | None received                     |
| 4. | CBC Refuse & Recycling Team                | None received                     |
| 5. | CBC Energy Efficiency & Sustainability     | Comments provided                 |
| 6. | CBC Air Quality Officer                    | No objection                      |

**NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATIONS:-**

192, 223, 227-229 Three Bridges Road;  
Three Bridges Convenience Store;  
4, 6, 8, 13 and 15 New Street.

**RESPONSES RECEIVED:-**

Two objections have been received from neighbouring properties. They state that the proposal will affect the peaceful character of the area, cause loss of privacy/overlooking, disturbance and noise affecting local residents. Residents will be standing outside the property causing disturbance. Use of the parking spaces day and night will cause disturbance and there are limited on-street spaces in the area. Anti-social behaviour would affect the area's character and could be affected by the off licence next door and alcohol consumption. This could also affect children at the nursery opposite. There are many open houses nearby whose residents cause problems and the hostel would make these worse.

## **REASON FOR REPORTING TO COMMITTEE:-**

This is a Crawley Borough Council planning application.

## **THE APPLICATION SITE:-**

- 1.1 The site contains a two storey detached double fronted house with two ground floor bay windows on Three Bridges Road. The property has a small front garden with a traditional rendered boundary wall with railings. It has a vehicular access onto New Street, which provides two car parking spaces within the rear garden area.
- 1.2 The surrounding area is generally residential and has a controlled parking zone. The site lies at the eastern end of Three Bridges Road, close to the junction with New Street. The Three Bridges Convenience Store is to the east. Nos. 215-223 Three Bridges Road, a terrace of houses to the west of the site, are Locally Listed Buildings. There is a current proposal to designate No. 225, the application property, as a Locally Listed Building.
- 1.3 The area to the south and east around Haslett Avenue East, is designated as an Air Quality Management Area. The site lies partially within Flood Zone 3 (including the building itself) and partially in Flood Zone 2, as shown on Environment Agency records. The water supply for the site is sourced from Southern Water (Sussex North Water Resource Zone).

## **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-**

- 1.4 The planning application seeks permission for change of use of the property from a House in Multiple Occupation (use class C4) to a hostel (sui generis) for six people. The hostel would be managed by Crawley Homes.

## **PLANNING HISTORY:-**

- 1.5 No relevant previous planning history.

## **PLANNING POLICY:-**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 1.6 The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July 2021 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. In achieving this the planning system has three overarching objectives, economic, social and environmental, that are interdependent and need to be secured in mutually supportive ways.
  - Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development. This section states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations, and an environmental objective to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. This includes making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity and addressing climate change.
  - Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes – this states that the supply of homes should be significantly boosted and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements should be addressed.
  - Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities – this section states that decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places

- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport – this section states that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use should be pursued and that safe access to sites is achieved.
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change - The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. Flood risk should not be increased elsewhere. This section supports the increased use of renewable and low carbon energy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including complying with local sustainability requirements.
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Development should not add to or be at risk from pollution.
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – Heritage assets should be preserved in a manner appropriate to their importance.

### Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030

1.7 The following Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (adopted December 2015) policies are relevant:

- Policy SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) The Council will take a positive approach, in line with the planned approach to Crawley new town, to approving development which is sustainable and work proactively with applicants, stakeholders and other partners to find solutions. Development will be supported where it meets strategic objectives including becoming carbon neutral and addressing climate change; complementing the town's compact character and neighbourhood principles; respecting heritage; protecting and enhancing Green Infrastructure; creating a safe environment; providing for social and economic needs; and according with the Plan's policies and objectives.
- Policy CH3 (Normal Requirements of all New Development) Development should be based on a thorough understanding of the significance and distinctiveness of the site and its wider context and demonstrate how attractive or important features of the site will be retained. These include views, landmarks, footpaths, rights of way, trees, green spaces, hedges, other historic landscape features or nature conservation assets, walls and buildings. Development should also provide/retain a good standard of amenity for future occupants and not cause harm to the amenity of the surrounding area, including through traffic generation and general activity. Development should meet the requirements for its safe and proper use, in particular in regard to access, circulation and manoeuvring and in this case vehicle parking.
- Policy ENV2 (Biodiversity) All development will be expected to incorporate biodiversity features where appropriate and enhance existing features of nature conservation value around the development.
- Policy ENV6 (Sustainable Design and Construction) All development must consider how it can address sustainability through reducing energy consumption, using renewable and low carbon energy, improving existing buildings when adding extensions, minimising carbon emissions during development and ensuring embedded carbon is retained and considering water stress and temperature extremes. A Sustainability Statement should be submitted demonstrating how sustainability has been addressed through design and construction.
- Policy ENV8 (Development and Flood Risk) Development proposals must avoid areas which are exposed to an unacceptable risk from flooding, and must not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- Policy ENV9 (Tackling Water Stress) Non-residential development, where technically feasible and viable, should meet BREEAM Excellent including addressing maximum water efficiencies under the mandatory water credits.
- Policy ENV11 (Development and Noise) states that residential development will be permitted where users will not be exposed to unacceptable noise disturbance. Development that would expose users of noise sensitive uses to unacceptable noise levels will not be permitted.
- Policy ENV12 (Air Quality) Development proposals that do not result in a material negative impact on air quality will normally be permitted.
- Policy IN2 (Strategic Delivery of Telecommunications Infrastructure) requires proposals to be connected to high quality communications infrastructure.
- Policy IN3 (Development and Requirements for Sustainable Transport) Development should be focussed to achieve sustainable transport through use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Development should meet the access needs generated and not have unacceptable impact on congestion or highway safety.

- Policy IN4 (Car and Cycle Parking Standards) Proposals should provide the appropriate car and cycle parking required by supplementary guidance.

#### Submission Draft Crawley Borough Local Plan 2021-2037

1.8 The Submission Draft Local Plan was the subject of Regulation 19 public consultation from 6 January to 30 June 2021 and therefore limited weight should be given to the following applicable policies:

- Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy DD1: Normal Requirements of All New Development
- Policy DD2: Inclusive Design
- Policy HA5: Locally Listed Buildings
- Policy IN3: Supporting High Quality Communications
- Policy H3: Housing Typologies
- Policy H9: Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Policy GI3: Biodiversity and Net Gain
- Policy SDC1: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy SDC3: Tackling Water Stress
- Policy EP1: Development and Flood Risk
- Policy EP4: Development and Noise
- Policy EP5: Air Quality
- Policy ST1: Development and Requirements for Sustainable Transport
- Policy ST2: Car and Cycle Parking Standards

#### Supplementary Planning Documents

1.9 The following supplementary planning documents are also applicable to the development of this site:

**Planning and Climate Change SPD** – Adopted October 2016 – This provides further guidance on addressing the sustainability policies within the Local Plan, with examples of best practice and how to demonstrate compliance with the policies.

**Urban Design SPD** – Adopted October 2016 - This document contains the Borough's indicative minimum parking standards. For hostels, the standard is one space per 4 residents and 1 visitor space per 20 residents. For houses in multiple occupation, the standard is 0.5 spaces per unit. Disabled, cycle and motorcycle parking standards are also contained within Annex 1.

#### **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:-**

1.10 The key issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Proposed change of use
- Standard of accommodation and impact on the character of the area
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Parking and highways
- Sustainability
- Flooding and drainage
- Air quality
- Water neutrality

#### Proposed change of use

1.11 The property is currently used as a small House in Multiple Occupation (C4) accommodating six people. Houses in Multiple Occupation play an important role in meeting Crawley's housing needs.

The property was originally built as a house and its rooms are of an appropriate size and layout for HMO use.

- 1.12 The proposal would form a hostel (sui generis) to be managed by Crawley Homes. It too would accommodate six people. The applicant has stated that although the Council is unable to issue an HMO licence to itself, in practical terms, there would be little difference between the uses. The hostel would be operated in the same way as the existing nine hostels operated by the Council and would provide accommodation for the homeless. The Hostel team at Crawley Homes would manage nominations, provide support to the residents, regularly visit the property and carry out the required fire safety and maintenance checks. Tenants would stay for as long as needed.
- 1.13 The hostel would help to meet a specific housing need and would be occupied in a very similar way to the existing HMO use. Residential uses are appropriate in this area. The Local Plan does not contain specific policies addressing either the loss of an HMO or the provision of a new hostel. It is not considered that there is an objection in policy terms to the hostel use in principle.
- 1.14 The applicant has confirmed that the proposed hostel would contribute to the Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 priority 4.2 to keep the temporary accommodation portfolio under review to ensure it meets the Council's statutory duties. On 14 March 2022, the Council had 335 homeless households in all forms of temporary accommodation, of which 145 were in nightly paid accommodation and 41 placed outside the Borough. The overall capacity of the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio is 191 units, so there is a current deficit of 144 units against demand.
- 5.6 The principle of the proposed use is consistent with the NPPF objective to deliver homes for all members of the community. It would help to provide housing for those in urgent housing need and, in principle, is considered acceptable.

#### Standard of accommodation and impact on the character of the area

- 5.7 The hostel would provide six bedrooms for individuals, with shared kitchen, dining/lounge and utility room. The existing rear garden would also be available for residents' use. Tenants' bedrooms would have a minimum area of 12.5 sqm. Whilst there are no planning policy standards on hostel room sizes, the building as a whole and the individual bedrooms would all meet the Nationally Described Space Standards for dwellings. The communal areas are also of a good size. Overall, the building has sufficient internal and external space to create a good standard of hostel accommodation.
- 5.8 Heritage work associated with the Local Plan Review has recommended that Hedley House should be designated as a Locally Listed Building. The current application is for change of use only and no physical alterations are proposed to the building. No change to the physical appearance of the building would result. Residential occupation, with associated ongoing maintenance, would help to ensure the long term future of the building. No harm to the proposed heritage asset would result.

#### Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 5.9 The proposed change of use would retain residential use by six people. No physical alterations are proposed. No intensification in use of the property is proposed and no alterations, such as new windows, that could affect neighbours.
- 5.10 Two neighbouring properties have raised concerns about impact upon the character of the area and about disturbance and noise, including from residents standing outside the property. Anti-social behaviour could affect the area's character and could be affected by the off licence next door and alcohol consumption. This could also affect children at the nursery opposite.
- 5.11 The applicant has confirmed that to *"enable appropriate management of the hostel and to reduce any adverse impact upon adjoining residents, all occupiers would have to enter into a Licence Agreement with Crawley Borough Council and comply with the conditions of that licence and any complaints of anti-social behaviour will be investigated and acted upon as appropriate."*

- 5.12 The Hostel Officers would deal with any on-site issues along with other housing management professionals. They are managed by a Tenancy Services Manager, together with Area Housing Managers and a large team of generic Housing Officers. The property would be visited several times per week and a Health and Safety inspection carried out weekly. The contract conditions for residents provide other restrictions including, for instance, no visitors without permission and no overnight visitors' policy, no smoking in the building, no playing of loud music and no anti-social behaviour. Proven breaching of those requirements may lead to the eviction of the occupiers.
- 5.13 Concern was also raised by neighbours about use of the parking spaces day and night causing disturbance and that there are limited on-street spaces in the area. The number of parking spaces is not changing and there is no reason to believe that they would be used in a different way, such as late at night, to current use. It is likely that car ownership levels for residents would be very low and probably lower than would be expected for the existing HMO use. There is no evidence that use of the spaces would cause significant disturbance or that the proposal would significantly increase on-street parking demand. The area is, in any case, subject to on-street parking controls.
- 5.14 Overall, the proposed works would not physically alter the building externally and no additional overlooking would result. Any potential impacts from residents would be more actively managed by housing staff than the current HMO use and there is no evidence to suggest that additional impact upon neighbouring amenity would result. The proposed conversion to a hostel is considered to comply with the relevant Local Plan policies in terms of residential amenity.

### Parking

- 5.15 The application site contains two car parking spaces, accessed from New Street. No change is proposed to the parking arrangements. The Council's parking standards seek 0.5 spaces per unit for the existing HMO use. This would equate to three spaces. The current provision has a shortfall of one space. The standard for the proposed hostel use is one space per four residents and one visitor space for every twenty residents. This would equate to 2.5 spaces for the proposed use. No change is proposed to the existing arrangements. The parking standards do not seek increased parking provision for the proposed use, which actually requires less provision than the existing use. WSCC Highways have raised no objection in highways or parking terms. On-street parking in this area is controlled. It is not considered that the proposed use would lead to an increase in parking demand.
- 5.16 The site sits within a sustainable location with easy pedestrian access to local shops and other facilities. Public transport by bus or train is also only a short walk away. Secure cycle storage can be provided in the existing shed in the rear garden. Therefore, the proposed access and parking would be acceptable in principle in terms of highways safety and parking provision.

### Sustainability

- 5.17 The Council is in the process of purchasing this property. A full survey has yet to be undertaken to assess potential sustainability improvements. Given the potential designation as a Locally Listed Building, significant external changes, such as solar panels on the front elevation, would not be appropriate. However, some improvements, such as additional loft insulation and replacement of water fixtures and fittings by more efficient fixtures and fittings, may be possible and can be assessed by the applicant.

### Flooding and drainage

- 5.18 The site is located partially in Environment Agency Flood Zone 3 and partially in Flood Zone 2. This is primarily as a result of its proximity to Gatwick Stream to the east, which could cause fluvial flooding. The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment. The proposal would not alter the use of the property significantly in flooding terms, as residential use for six people would be retained.
- 5.19 The Council's Drainage officer has raised concerns about ground floor bedrooms, of which there are two, and seeks to avoid their use for sleeping. Planning officers do not consider that this can be

controlled through the current application, since these rooms are already in use as bedrooms within the existing HMO.

- 5.20 The Flood Risk Assessment recommends raising ground floor plug sockets and other measures to make the ground floor more resilient in case of flooding. It also contains a Flood Evacuation Plan. The Drainage officer has confirmed that implementation of these measures would improve flood resilience.
- 5.21 It is not considered that refusal on flood grounds is justifiable, given the existing use of the ground floor bedrooms. However, it would be appropriate to condition implementation of the Flood Evacuation Plan and, in the event of any internal improvements, incorporation of measures to improve flood resilience.

#### Air quality

- 5.22 The application site lies adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area, which is focussed on Crawley Avenue, Hazelwick Avenue and Northgate Avenue. It includes the parts of Three Bridges Road and New Street immediately outside the site.
- 5.23 The Air Quality Management officer has confirmed that there have been no air quality exceedances on the immediately adjoining roads. She states that the proposal would not result in unacceptable exposure to poor air quality for future residents or introduce additional vehicle emissions. Consequently no objection is raised on air quality grounds.

#### Water neutrality

- 5.24 The Local Planning Authority received a Position Statement from Natural England on 14 September 2021. It raised significant concerns about the impact of water abstraction in the Sussex North Water Resource Zone upon the Arun Valley's protected SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. The existing property has a connection to the water supply. The existing and proposed uses would both involve six people living in the property. The agent has confirmed that staff would not live or sleep on site. On the basis that the same number of people would be living in the property and that visitor levels (including visits by hostel staff) would be comparable to existing, a screening assessment has been undertaken which concludes that the proposal would be water neutral. The Local Planning Authority has therefore concluded that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the protected sites and would not conflict with the obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

### **CONCLUSIONS:-**

- 6.1 The proposed change of use would provide additional accommodation for homeless people to help address Crawley's significant need. The building would provide a good standard of accommodation for its residents. The concerns expressed by neighbours are recognised, but officers consider the proposed use to be very similar to the existing one. The hostel would be actively managed and officers do not feel that significant harm would be caused to neighbouring amenity. The proposal is acceptable in parking and highways terms. Flood risk can be addressed by condition and there are no significant air quality concerns. The proposal is water neutral.

### **RECOMMENDATION RE: CR/2021/0693/FUL:-**

**PERMIT**, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.  
REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved plans as listed below save as varied by the conditions hereafter:  
(Drawing numbers to be added)  
REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. The proposed hostel hereby approved shall be occupied by a maximum of six residents at any time unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
REASON: In the interests of amenity and to ensure a good standard of accommodation in accordance with policy CH3 of the Crawley Borough Council Plan 2015-2030.
4. The two existing vehicle parking spaces accessed from New Street shall be retained solely for the use of hostel residents and visitors unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
REASON: To ensure that adequate and satisfactory provision is made for the parking of vehicles clear of adjacent highways in accordance with policy CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030.
5. The existing shed in the rear garden shall be kept available for use as covered and secure cycle parking for residents of the hostel unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
REASON: To provide alternative and sustainable travel options to the use of the car in accordance with policies IN3 and IN4 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the cycle parking standards within the Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document.
6. The Flood Evacuation Plan contained within Appendix D of the Flood Risk Assessment shall be fully implemented upon commencement of the hostel use hereby approved. Any rewiring or other electrical improvements to be carried out in connection with the hostel use hereby approved shall include raising the ground floor sockets to an appropriate level.  
REASON: To improve the flood resilience of the property and to protect future occupants in accordance with Policy ENV8 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030.
7. Prior to the hostel hereby approved being brought into use, details of measures to improve the sustainability of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
REASON: To address sustainability objectives in accordance with Policy ENV6 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the Planning and Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document.

#### 1. NPPF Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

This decision has been taken in accordance with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework, as set out in article 35, of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015.





# ArcGIS Web Map



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